

American Spectator to Go On-Line

By Stephen Schwartz
Chronicle Staff Writer

In a combination of technology, intelligence agency know-how and literary enterprise, a national conservative monthly has offered its contributing writers the direct publication of new, unedited analyses via a business database accessible through personal computers.

For writers, the innovative service offered by the Virginia-based American Spectator is an unbelievable deal: access to the reader without the interference of editors or competition with other writers for attention and space.

And unlike magazine articles for which writers usually receive a single check, the on-line publication will pay a royalty each time the text is accessed.

"The money won't be very much at first but we think writers will be excited by the direct access," said Spectator publishing executive Ron Burr. "We're asking writers to submit anything they have, from short movie reviews to major articles, on disk, and we'll put them out to users. It leaves our editors without much to do."

The American Spectator will handle

Whitewater Sociopaths, by James Ring Adams

THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

The Men We Abandoned

— John Conry on the MFA Cover-Up —



Fred Barnes: What Health-Cost Crisis?

Thomas Nowell on Edward Banfield

copyright and other issues, such as libel, by approving the previously unpublished material before it goes on-line. The service will be run by the American Spectator in partnership with Lookout Point, an on-line database focusing on geopolitics, economics, and business intelligence that is offered to individuals and to small- and

medium-size businesses at \$20 per hour of user time.

Lookout Point originated as an electronic mail service provided by Real-World Intelligence Inc., a strategic information service based in Washington state and mainly used by corporations. The service was developed by Herbert E. Meyer, a former official of the Central Intelligence Agency, using software tested in CIA applications.

Meyer's partner, Cleveland-based Michael Pincus, said it differs from Internet, the popular database and bulletin board for personal computer users. "On Internet, if you want commentary on a foreign policy issue, you may get 500 entries by hacks and freaks," at varying levels of coherence.

"We would rather offer 20 files written by world-class experts who already contribute to leading journals, than a grab bag of rehashed material," he said.

Burr pointed out that the on-line publication also will allow the American Spectator to more accurately gauge the market for articles on particular topics.

While considerable discussion about

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the information superhighway has focused on the improved access of readers to information, potential advantages to writers in the new information age are only beginning to be explored.

Burr and Pincus both emphasized that the concept offers greater freedom for writers, who will be encouraged to submit work they might otherwise hold back for fear it is not immediately timely or attention-getting enough.

Both also stressed that there will be vir-

tually no editorial interference. "We will just get the disks and put the information on-line," Burr said.

"We feel confident the material will reflect the quality we seek," Pincus said.